



Jussi Tervola

Supporting gender equality and integration

Immigrant families' child care choices
in the Nordic policy context



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The publications in this series have undergone a formal referee process.

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Layout: Pekka Loiri

ISBN 978-952-284-035-6 (print)
ISBN 978-952-284-036-3 (pdf)

ISSN-L 1238-5050
ISSN 1238-5050 (print)
ISSN 2323-7724 (pdf)

URI <http://urn.fi/URN:NBN:fi-fe201804036299>

Publisher: Kela, Helsinki, 2018

Printed by Erweko



Abstract

Tervola J. **Supporting gender equality and integration. Immigrant families' child care choices in the Nordic policy context.** Helsinki: The Social Insurance Institution of Finland, Studies in social security and health 149, 2018. 165 pp. ISBN 978-952-284-035-6 (print), 978-952-284-036-3 (pdf).

Contemporary welfare states actively promote their key values and goals, such as gender equality and high employment. In family policy, these goals are pursued with allocated parental leave for both parents and subsidized day care services, for instance. However, it is known from previous research that parental leave is divided less equally between parents in immigrant families than in other families, and children with immigrant background participate less in centre-based day care despite the evidence that they would benefit from it the most. This study sets out to scrutinize immigrant families' care choices and their determinants in Finland and Sweden. The study is based on comprehensive administrative register data, and the choices are observed from the take-up of different benefits. Economic and demographic factors are considered through regression analysis. Immigrant fathers in both Finland and Sweden show clearly lower take-up rates of paternity and parental leave than native-born fathers. Generally, though, the take-up rates of immigrant fathers are much higher in Sweden than in Finland, and the gap between the countries is largely traced back to differences in policy systems. However, the study also provides evidence that social norms play a role in fathers' parental leave use, even between Finnish-born and Swedish-born fathers. Moreover, immigrant families' choices between child home care and day care follow the pattern previously found in some European and US studies. In Finland, with strong policy support for both home and day care, immigrant families take care of their children at home longer than native-borns. However, after the child turns three, immigrants demonstrate an increasing preference for day care, even more so than native families. This may reflect immigrant-specific preferences for children's integration and language acquisition. All in all, it seems that care choices in immigrant families have many distinct features compared to the majority families. Nevertheless, this study provides evidence that care choices can be steered and family policy goals approached through efficient and consistent policies also among immigrant populations.

Keywords: immigrants, families, integration, child care, parental leave, children, early childhood education and care, family policy, equality, equality policy, international comparison, Finland, Sweden

Tiivistelmä

Tervola J. **Sukupuolten tasa-arvoa ja kotoutumista tukemassa. Maahanmuuttajaperheiden lastenhoitovalinnat pohjoismaisen hyvinvointivaltion kontekstissa.** Helsinki: Kela, Sosiaali- ja terveysturvan tutkimuksia 149, 2018. 165 s. ISBN 978-952-284-035-6 (nid.), 978-952-284-036-3 (pdf).

Hyvinvointivaltiot toimivat aktiivisesti arvojensa ja tavoitteidensa, kuten sukupuolten tasa-arvon ja korkean työllisyysasteen, puolesta. Perhepolitiikassa näihin tavoitteisiin pyritään mm. isille suunnatuilla vanhempainvapailta ja subventoiduilla varhaiskasvatuspäiväpaikoilla. Aikaisemmat kansainväliset tutkimukset kuitenkin osoittavat, että maahanmuuttajaperheissä vanhempainvapaa jakautuu epätasaisemmin vanhempien kesken ja lapset osallistuvat varhaiskasvatukseen harvemmin kuin muissa perheissä, vaikka tutkimusten mukaan erityisesti maahanmuuttajataustaiset lapset hyötyvät varhaiskasvatuksesta. Tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan maahanmuuttajaperheiden lastenhoitovalintoja Suomessa ja Ruotsissa laajojen rekisteriaineistojen avulla. Taloudellisten ja väestöllisten taustatekijöiden yhteyttä valintoihin selvitetään regressioanalyysin avulla. Maahanmuuttajaisät Suomessa ja Ruotsissa käyttävät kantaväestön isää selvästi keskimääräistä harvemmin isyysvapaita. Maahanmuuttajaisät käyttävät vapaita kuitenkin selvästi yleisemmin Ruotsissa kuin Suomessa. Erot maiden välillä juontuvat pitkälti eroista vanhempainvapaajärjestelmissä. Eriikäisinä muuttaneiden isien vapaiden käytön vertailu tosin viittaa siihen, että myös sosiaaliset normit vaikuttavat vapaiden käyttöön. Suomessa, jossa tuetaan sekä lasten kotihoitoa että päivähoitoa, maahanmuuttajataustaiset lapset ovat keskimäärin muita pidempään kotihoidossa. Toisaalta yli kolmevuotiaiden lasten päivähoitoa suositaan maahanmuuttajaperheissä jopa enemmän kuin suomalaistaustaisissa perheissä. Tämä heijastanee maahanmuuttajaperheiden pyrkimystä edistää lastensa integraatiota ja kielenoppimista. Kaiken kaikkiaan maahanmuuttajaperheiden lastenhoitovalinnoissa on monia piirteitä ja ulottuvuuksia, joita kantaväestön perheillä ei ole. Tehokkaalla ja johdonmukaisella perhepolitiikalla voidaan kuitenkin edistää perhepolitiikan tavoitteiden toteutumista myös maahanmuuttajaperheissä.

Avainsanat: maahanmuuttajat, perheet, kotoutuminen, lastenhoito, vanhempainvapaa, lapset, varhaiskasvatus, perhepolitiikka, tasa-arvo, tasa-arvopolitiikka, kansainvälinen vertailu, Suomi, Ruotsi

Sammandrag

Tervola J. **Stödande av jämställdhet och integration. Invandrarnas val av dagvårdsform i ett nordiskt välfärdsperspektiv.** Helsingfors: FPA, Social trygghet och hälsa, undersökningar 149, 2018. 165 s. ISBN 978-952-284-035-6 (hft.), 978-952-284-036-3 (pdf).

Samtida välfärdsstater spelar en aktiv roll för att främja sina nyckelvärden och mål, såsom jämställdhet mellan könen och hög sysselsättningsnivå. I familjepolitiken eftersträvas de här målen genom föräldraledighet som är uppdelad på båda föräldrarna och subventionerade daghemstjänster. Tidigare internationella undersökningar visar emellertid att föräldraledigheterna i invandrarfamiljer fördelas ojämna än i andra familjer. Barn med invandrarbakgrund deltar också mindre i småbarnspedagogik, även om forskning visar att de speciellt skulle dra nytta av detta. I studien beskrivs invandrarnas val av dagvårdsform i en finsk och en svensk kontext med hjälp av omfattande administrativa registerdata. De ekonomiska och demografiska faktorernas roll beaktas genom regressionsanalys. Invandrarfäderna i Finland och Sverige använder betydligt färre pappadagar och mindre föräldraledighet än infödda fäder. I Sverige tar invandrarfäderna emellertid ut betydligt mera ledigheter än i Finland. Skillnaderna mellan länderna går i stor utsträckning tillbaka på skillnaderna mellan länderna i systemen för föräldraledigheter. Studien visar emellertid också att de sociala normerna spelar en roll i fädernas föräldraledighet, även i fråga om skillnaderna mellan finskfödda och svenskfödda fäder. I Finland, som kännetecknas av starkt politiskt stöd för både hemvård och daghem, vårdar invandrarfamiljer sina barn hemma i längre perioder än andra familjer. Men efter att barnen fyllt tre år visar invandrare alltmör en preferens för daghem, ännu mer än familjer med inhemsk bakgrund. Resultatet återspeglar sannolikt invandarspecifika preferenser som är förknippade med barnens integration och språkinläring. Sammantaget finns det många drag och dimensioner i invandrarfamiljernas val av dagvårdsform som inte förekommer bland familjerna i majoritetsbefolkningen. Med effektiv och konsekvent familjepolitik kan man emellertid främja uppfyllelsen av de familjepolitiska målen också i fråga om invandrarfamiljer.

Nyckelord: invandrare, familjer, integration, barndagvård, dagvårdsform, föräldraledighet, barn, småbarnspedagogik, familjepolitik, jämställdhet, jämställdhetspolitik, internationell jämförelse, Finland, Sverige

Acknowledgements

This thesis would never have even started without the support and encouragement of my colleagues and friends. Therefore, I would like to state my gratitude to a few people and organisations along the way.

Going back to the start, I thank Professor Risto Lehtonen who first introduced me to the world of research and social policy by arranging an internship for me at Kela Research. For the following years at Kela, I owe my gratitude especially to Professor Olli Kangas and Dr Pertti Honkanen who have encouraged and enlightened me in many ways throughout. I also wish to thank Economists Jouko Verho and Ulla Hämäläinen who taught me a lot about the strict principles of conducting quantitative research and writing a research article. I further extend my thanks to my superiors in Kela, Docent Karoliina Koskenvuo, Docent Jaana Martikainen and Research Professor Hennamari Mikkola for the opportunity to work on my thesis while working in Kela.

I thank my supervisor, Professor Heikki Hiilamo who persuaded me to pursue doctoral studies. In the beginning my plan was to mainly study refugee integration, and child care choices constituted only one of the four substudies. Somewhere along the way, child care choices seized the whole thesis, thanks to Docent Anita Haataja and the Kela Research project 'Families with children'. I am thankful to Anita for her support along the way.

In 2016, I also had the opportunity to visit Stockholm University to collaborate in comparative studies. Professor Mikko Niemelä and Professor Juho Härkönen, the consortium project Tackling Inequalities in Time of Austerity (TITA) and the Stockholm University Demography Unit (SUDA) enabled the visit. In SUDA, I was given the opportunity to work with Professor Ann-Zofie Duvander and Associate Professor Eleonora Mussino from whom I learned a lot about scientific research in international standards. Thank you all!

For all kinds of help during the publication processes, I would also like to thank the publication services at Kela, especially Jaana Ahlstedt, Tarja Hyvärinen, Leena Rautjärvi and Maini Tulokas. For the funding of the research, I owe my gratitude above all to Kela and the TITA project but also to the Foundation for Cultural Exchange between Finland and Sweden.

Lastly, I thank my colleagues at Kela, at SUDA and recently at the National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) for invaluable peer support and company. Above all, I express my warm thanks to all those close to me – my dearest friends, my parents Anneli and Pentti, my sisters Maija and Eija, my godson Aleksi, and my spouse Judit, for their love and support and giving me some quality time away from the academic world.

Helsinki, March 2018

Jussi Tervola

Contents	List of original publications.....	10
	1 Introduction.....	11
	2 Family policies – aims and outcomes	14
	2.1 Gender and policy regimes	14
	2.2 Paid leaves for fathers in Finland and Sweden.....	16
	2.3 Child care policies in Finland.....	18
	2.4 Evidence on the child effects of day care	20
	3 Immigrants.....	22
	3.1 Immigrants as a subject of study	22
	3.2 Integration of immigrants.....	23
	3.3 Immigrants in Finland and Sweden.....	24
	3.4 Labour market integration of immigrants in Finland and Sweden	26
	4 Determinants of care choices.....	28
	4.1 Individual preferences or structural constraints?	28
	4.2 Empirical evidence.....	31
	4.2.1 Division of leave in immigrant families.....	31
	4.2.2 Day care participation of children with immigrant backgrounds.....	32
	5 Empirical specifications.....	35
	5.1 Aims and research questions.....	35
	5.2 Data	36
	5.3 Methods.....	39
	6 Findings.....	41
	6.1 Promoting parental leave for immigrant fathers. What role does policy play? (Substudy I).....	41
	6.2 Decomposing the determinants of fathers’ parental leave use. Evidence from migration between Finland and Sweden (Substudy II)....	42
	6.3 Use of cash-for-care among immigrants in the 2000s (Substudy III)	43
	6.4 Parent at home, child in day care? Examining immigrant families’ care choices in the Finnish policy context (Substudy IV)	45

7 Conclusion..... 48

7.1 Summary of the findings 48

7.2 Discussion..... 49

7.3 Critical perceptions of the study..... 51

References..... 54

Original publications 65

List of original publications

This thesis is based on the following original publications:

- I **Tervola J, Duvander A-Z, Mussino E.** Promoting parental leave for immigrant fathers. What role does policy play? *Social Politics* 2017; 24 (3): 269–297.
- II **Mussino E, Tervola J, Duvander A-Z.** Decomposing the determinants of fathers' parental leave use. Evidence from migration between Finland and Sweden. Stockholm: Stockholm University, Stockholm Research Reports in Demography 17, 2017. (Submitted to journal.)
- III **Tervola J.** Maahanmuuttajien kotihoidon tuen käyttö 2000-luvulla. *Yhteiskuntapolitiikka* 2015; 80 (2): 121–133.
- IV **Tervola J.** Vanhempi kotona, lapsi päivähoidossa? Tarkastelu lastenhoitovalinnoista maahanmuuttajaperheissä. In: Haataja A, Airio I, Saarikallio-Torp M, Valaste M, eds. *Laulu 573 566 perheestä. Lapsiperheet ja perhepolitiikka 2000-luvulla.* Helsinki: Kela, Teemakirja 15, 2016.

The publications are referred to in the text by their Roman numerals and reprinted (print edition) by permission of the copyright holders.

1 Introduction

International mobility has existed since the establishment of nation states, but the volume of mobile population has increased drastically since the latter half of the 20th century. The fast growing global population and developing means of travel and communication are known to facilitate the change. The process is self-accelerating: previous migration generates transnational identities and further mobility. (Castles et al. 2013.)

Increasing migration has brought unforeseen challenges to nation states and their national social insurance systems. The boundaries of nations have become blurred and the question of who should be eligible for national welfare benefits has become a salient topic of debate (Sainsbury 2006). Those given access to a country and its social security system are faced with a mission of “integration” to the new host society. While remaining a vague and broad concept used in different contexts, integration in reference to local labour markets is often highlighted (Ager and Strang 2008).

Several public policies are aimed to contribute to immigrant integration (e.g. Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen 2016). The target of integration has given rise to integration policy – a novel policy domain, which in the Nordic context consists of active labour market measures, such as language courses for the unemployed. However, integration can hardly be detached from other, more traditional policy domains which have strong interactions with employment. Rather, integration permeates all of them. It is strongly present in, for example, housing policies, and not least in family policies which are the focus of this research.

Family policies have been motivated through a wide set of welfare state goals, such as higher fertility levels, child poverty reduction and supporting child development (Saraceno et al. 2012). The central aim of family policies, especially in the Nordic context, has been to facilitate and promote gender equality through paid parental leaves for both parents and subsidized day care services (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006). They have contributed undisputedly to the fact that Nordic countries have the narrowest gender gaps in many domains, such as economic participation and educational attainment (World Economic Forum 2015). However, based on statistics on the use of parental leave and labour market participation (Duvander 2010; Eurostat 2017a), parents in immigrant¹ families demonstrate, on average, more specialized division between genders. The gaps can be partly traced back to the circumstances in origin countries (Antecol 2000).

Family policies play a crucial role not only for the parents but also for their children. The subjective right to public day care in the Nordic countries has ensured relatively equal access to and high participation rates in those services (Ghysels and

1 Immigrant is defined here as foreign-born. See Chapter 3 for further discussion about the term.

Van Lancker 2011). The public intervention seems well-founded: empirical literature (Lazzari and Vandebroek 2012; Felfe and Lalive 2014; Gottfried and Kim 2015) is quite unanimous in that participation in high-quality day care at a certain age helps socialize and integrate the child to the host society, especially when the child is disadvantaged or has an immigrant background. At the same time, the existing studies have found that the groups of children who would benefit most from centre-based care are under-represented in these services (Leseman 2002; Lazzari and Vandebroek 2012).

These examples show that the introduced family policies have not reached the same levels of success among immigrant families as among the settled majority. The aim of this research compilation is to shed more light upon the reasons behind this in the Nordic policy context, more accurately in Finland and Sweden, characterized by relatively strong public interventions. The study context can be justified for multiple reasons. Concentrating on strong policy interventions facilitates the study of policies. Second, there are high-quality register data available. Third, because eligibility for benefits in the Nordic context is not typically tied to citizenship or contribution history but residency, we can observe care choices more reliably through benefit take-up.

Divided into four substudies, the first two scrutinize the role of leave policies and, on the other hand, the cultural norms behind immigrant fathers' leave take-up. The last two studies explore immigrant families' choices between day care and home care in Finland, where both options are relatively strongly subsidized. The role of financial and demographic factors is discussed on the basis of regression analysis. On a broader level, the study builds on the literature strand assessing reactions to social policies and whether they meet their targets in different population strata. Therefore, in addition to the purely academic interest, the results of the study will serve the planning of policy systems.

In this study, the "success" of policies is measured through their popularity, that is, how much they are used. The take-up of two distinct benefits are considered: fathers' use of paternity and parental leaves comparatively in Finland and Sweden and the use of a cash-for-care subsidy² in Finland. The former reflects the gender division of childcare inside the household. The latter translates to the parents' choice between child home care and day care.

Two statistical facts further underscore the importance of examining the issue in Finland and Sweden. Immigrants' gender gaps in labour force participation rates are accentuated in Finland and Sweden although gender equality is generally promoted and the gender gaps for native-born populations are among the narrowest (Eurostat 2017a). Second, the gap in school performance between students with immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds is found to be the widest in Finland (OECD 2013,

2 This is a flat-rate benefit paid after parental leave for not using public day care services (see 2.3).

73) while day care participation is found to contribute to school readiness especially for children with immigrant backgrounds (Lazzari and Vandenbroeck 2012; Felfe and Lalive 2014; Gottfried and Kim 2015).

The study is based on extensive administrative register data containing the birth cohorts of 1999–2009. The heterogeneity of the immigrant population is taken into account by dividing it into subgroups by countries of birth. The standardized form of register data provides an objective and robust image on care choices. However, many aspects of the choices, such as awareness of available care options, are not observed in registers. For this part, previous survey and qualitative research complements this study.

The content of the research compilation runs as follows. In Chapter 2, I review family policies, their aims and outcomes with an emphasis on the Nordic context. The discussion then moves to immigrants as a subject of study in Chapter 3, which is followed by a presentation of the theoretical foundations of decision-making and care choices as well as previous empirical evidence in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 introduces the research questions and the empirical specifications of the study. Thereafter, I move to summarize the findings from the four substudies. Last, I conclude with a discussion of the findings, limitations, policy recommendations and needs for future research.

2 Family policies – aims and outcomes

2.1 Gender and policy regimes

During the past century, social scientists have brought forth awareness of the social dimensions of gender, in addition to the biological ones. Consequently, a division of terms has emerged: ‘sex’ refers to the socially agreed distinction based on biological criteria whereas ‘gender’ emphasizes the social dimensions and representations of one’s sex (e.g. West and Zimmerman 1987). In this study, the term ‘gender’ is used to highlight the social dimensions.

Whether gendered power structures are more determined by biology or social structures remains widely discussed in academia. Some archaeological evidence suggests that hunter-gatherers were actually relatively egalitarian in all dimensions, but inequality increased when agriculture was introduced (Erdal and Whiten 1996), implying the social origin of differences. Nowadays, all contemporary cultures demonstrate more or less gendered specialization patterns where the mother is more often the primary caregiver (Eagly and Wood 1999). This division was perhaps the strongest in traditional industrial societies. Females were typically responsible for domestic tasks such as caring for the children, and the males’ duty was to earn the living outside the household.

After the mid-20th century, this division started to wane in many countries, and women’s labour force participation became more common. As a result, the demand for gender-equal policies grew (Huber and Stephens 2000). Especially in the Nordic countries, where the welfare state was expanding and social rights were being institutionalized in the 1960s and 1970s, stronger policies to support gender equality were also demanded. Consequently, and facilitated by the social democratic governments, multiple reforms such as the transformation of the parental leave scheme took place in the 1970s. (Ellingsæter and Leira 2006.)

It should be noted that family policies were not considered tools for gender equality alone. They were increasingly motivated by a wider set of welfare state goals, such as higher fertility levels, child poverty reduction and child development (Saraceno et al. 2012). In some instances, as in the case of Finnish cash-for-care, family policies were called for to facilitate families’ freedom of choice (Hiilamo and Kangas 2009).

The expansion of family policies occurred only in some countries while public interventions remained marginal in others. Multiple academics have proposed typologies of gender policy regimes reflecting the magnitude of public interventions (e.g. Korpi 2000; Mahon 2002; Lohmann and Zagel 2016). One of the best-known typologies is from Korpi (2000) who distinguishes three regimes: the dual-earner model, the market-oriented model and the general family support model. The regimes differ in the extent of state interventions as well as the type of gender balance that is sup-

ported. The central policy tools used are taxation schemes, paid social benefits and a subsidized provision of services.

In the market oriented model, such as the US model, state interventions are minimal and market forces shape gender relations. In the general family support model, such as in Ireland, there are no gender-differentiated policies, or if they exist, they incentivize gender specialization inside the household. Policy features like household taxation or unallocated parental leaves are common. Korpi (2000) categorizes the Nordic countries as members of the dual-earner regime; they promote the labour market participation of both parents with policy tools, such as individual taxation, gender-allocated parental leave and public child care services (Hakovirta et al. 2016). This is the stereotype laid upon the Nordic countries and also reproduced in the title of this thesis. However, it should be emphasized that family policies in the Nordic countries, as in all countries within a regime, vary greatly. Regime typologies should be seen merely as ideal types and few countries fit one type perfectly.

Finland is a good example of a country that is hard to categorize. Where Korpi (2000) classifies Finland into the dual-earner regime, Mahon (2002) sees it as an example of the neofamilist model similar to France. Krapf (2014), in turn, categorizes Finland as an example of the pluralistic model which includes features of both the dual-earner and the general family support models. The main policy contradiction can be seen between the support of both home care and day care through the provision of cash benefits and services. Despite the ambiguity, support for gender equality through, for example, parental leave has been a central policy goal also in Finland.

Studies have shown that certain family policies have been successful in creating more equality between genders: the expansion of the paternity leave scheme in Norway resulted in a more equal division of household tasks between parents (Kotsadam and Finseraas 2011) but also among the children as they grew older (Kotsadam and Finseraas 2013). Even grandparents' gender perceptions have been observed to alter as a consequence of introducing a leave scheme in Germany (Unterhofer and Wrohlich 2017). The effect of a more gender-equal division of leave is also observed in the future earnings of the parents: fathers' earnings have decreased and mothers' earnings increased (Johansson 2010; Rege and Solli 2013).

In addition to gender equality, the policy support for paternal care can also be argued through other positive outcomes. Household finances are likely to benefit from the dual-earner model. The dual-earner model increases the economic independence of both parents and provides better resilience for social risks such as unemployment (see Haataja 1999; Härkönen 2011). Additionally, the father's participation in child care has been shown to have positive effects on the child's cognitive development and school outcomes (Huerta et al. 2013; Schober 2015; Cools et al. 2015). Last, policy support for gender equality and female employment is associated with a reduced di-

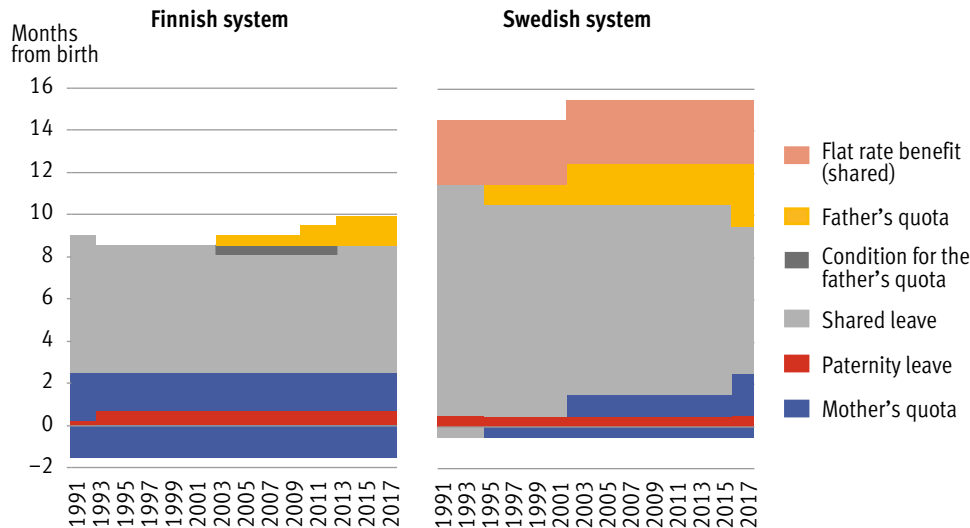
voiced risk (Allen and Daly 2007; Cooke et al. 2013), although the causal effect is obscure.

2.2 Paid leaves for fathers in Finland and Sweden

Both Finnish and Swedish family benefit systems have often been categorized as Nordic family benefit models (Haataja and Nyberg 2006). Although the current parental leave schemes in Finland and Sweden were introduced roughly at the same time in the 1970s, they developed at a diverging pace. This can also be seen in Figure 1, which presents the maximum lengths of different types of leaves through 1991–2017 in the two countries.

Two policy segments of fathers’ leave can be distinguished. In temporal order, the first is paternity leave³, that is, the leave taken simultaneously with the mother. In Finland, the first paternity leaves were introduced in 1978, but they were deducted from the mother’s share of the leave. A non-deductible three-week paternity leave was introduced in 1993 and, until 2013, it was to be used during the first eight months of the child’s life. In Sweden, two weeks of paternity leave were introduced in 1980 so that working fathers could take time off during the child’s early days and weeks. The paternity leave is to be used during the child’s first two months.

Figure 1. Development of paternity and parental benefit legislation during 1991–2017.



3 In the publication of Substudy I, the term ‘daddy days’ was used.

The second part is the parental leave⁴ that is available to either of the parents to use (shared part), or it can be reserved for one parent (quotas). It is noteworthy that the shared part is defined differently in the two countries. In Finland, it is not reserved for either parent specifically. When it is applied, the other parent's consent is not formally verified; in practice, the one who applies for the leave gets it first. In Sweden, the shared part is split between the parents, and the other parent's consent is required for using more than half of the benefit days. The shared part has been used mostly by the mother in both countries but more so in Finland (Haataja 2009).

In Finland, four months of parental leave are reserved for the mother (called maternity leave). The leave reserved for fathers was introduced in 2003, however, giving them access to two bonus weeks only if they used the last two weeks of the shared parental leave. The condition that regulated access to the quota was abolished in 2013, which can be interpreted as the introduction of a fathers' quota in its true meaning. However, the research at hand concentrates on the period when the conditional quota was in force and a few years before that (births in 1999–2009).

Mothers and fathers in Sweden have quotas of the same length. Since their introduction in 1995, the Swedish quotas have been part of what can be considered a gender-neutral parental leave whereby the two parents have the same rights. The first quota month was extended with a second month in 2002, at the same time as the entire leave was extended with one month. A third month was added in 2016. In addition, since 2008 fathers have been encouraged to use parental leave through an extra tax credit, called the equality bonus. However, this bonus has not visibly affected the take-up (Duvander and Johansson 2012).

As regards fathers' leaves, Finland seems to move towards the Swedish system in small steps and with a lag of many years. Once more, Sweden has been something of an example in family policy (Hiilamo 2002). However, large differences remain. The total parental leave is approximately five months longer in Sweden. Additionally, what is not visible in Figure 1 is the flexibility of the Swedish parental leave system. In Sweden, parents can use the benefit part time, or they can postpone using it until the child turns eight years old (twelve years old since 2012). However, the possibility of taking advantage of the system's flexibility depends greatly on the labour market status and the economic restrictions of the parent (Duvander and Viklund 2014). In Finland, the system is far more rigid. The benefit has to be used in one spell starting approximately five weeks before delivery. However, the flexibility for fathers to use parental leave was increased in 2007 so that the benefit can be postponed until the child turns eighteen months, allowing mothers to use a short spell of cash-for-care (see 2.3) before the father takes leave. Currently, fathers can postpone their leave until the child turns two.

4 In the publication of Substudy I, the term 'individual leave' was used.

According to Salmi and Lammi-Taskula (2015), the popularity of cash-for-care can be a major hindrance to fathers' use of parental leave because the father is not allowed to use the leave at the same time the mother receives the cash-for-care subsidy. Moreover, if the mother intends to use the subsidy, the father is likely to be discouraged from using his short leave between the mother's periods of parental leave and cash-for-care, especially as she then has to stop being the caretaker for a short period. Sweden had its own cash-for-care scheme from 2008 to 2015. However, it was introduced only in the municipalities that chose to do this, and the benefit take-up rates remained a fraction of those in Finland (2% in 2013, see Duvander and Ellingsæter 2016).

While all mothers with custody who reside in Finland or Sweden have the right to parental leave, the fathers' eligibility for benefits differs between the two countries. All resident fathers are eligible for paternity leave in Finland, but in Sweden, the leave is targeted exclusively at fathers in the labour force. Moreover, the father's entitlement to parental leave in Sweden is tied to the custody of the child, which in the case of separation typically remains with both parents. In Finland, the father's entitlement is more restricted, and was tied to marriage or cohabitation with the mother until 2017.

Since its introduction in the 1970s, the compensation level of parental leave has been somewhat lower in Finland than in Sweden. Currently, the Finnish replacement rate is 60–70 percent of earlier earned income depending on the year and income. However, employers often supplement the rate to full replacement. Parents who had no income before taking leave receive a flat rate of 20.9 euros per day (2016, converted to a scale of seven days a week). In Sweden, the earnings-related part was originally ninety percent of earlier income but was reduced in the 1990s to eighty percent and in the mid-2000s to 77.6 percent. Also, in Sweden, it is common for the employer to top off the benefit, often to ninety percent of the preceding income. Parents who had no previous income will receive a flat rate, which until 2002 was 6 euros a day but has since been increased stepwise to today's 25 euros a day.

2.3 Child care policies in Finland

In addition to fathers' leaves, female labour market participation is often supported through the provision of low-cost child care services. As the expenditure of day care services grew rather high, in 1985 Finland introduced a so called cash-for-care scheme, or a flat-rate allowance paid to families who do not use public day care services, to alleviate the costs (Sipilä and Korpinen 1998). Finland was a pioneer in that regard as no other Nordic country had introduced such a benefit, although a similar debate existed to some extent also in other Nordic countries (Hiilamo and Kangas 2009). Despite high female labour participation being institutionalized in Finland, the subsidy quickly found extensive support. It is used to prolong the parental leave regarded too short in light of the child's readiness for day care.

Among families who had a child in 2009, nine out of ten prolonged the care period with the cash-for-care subsidy. In 19 out of 20 cases, the subsidy was paid to the mother who was therefore, presumably, the main carer. It has been noted that families with lower socio-economic status use the subsidy more often and for longer periods. (Haataja and Juutilainen 2014.)

The subsidy can be paid to families until their youngest child turns three. The home care of other siblings below school age (the age of seven) is incentivized by paying a sibling supplement. In addition, the subsidy contains a means-tested supplement paid only to families with low income. Besides the statutory benefit, municipalities can pay extra supplements. All in all, the amount of subsidy varies in accordance with the household income, number of household members, the ages of the children and the municipality. As for 2017, the total gross sum per month can vary from 339 to over 800 euros per family.

The use of cash-for-care is substituted with day care services. Respectively, the fees for public day care, both centre-based and family day care, are means-tested with family income so that families in the lowest income group are exempt from the fees and the maximum fee is 290 euros per month and child. Every child below school age has the subjective right to public day care in Finland⁵. In addition, participation in private day care centres is subsidized with a private day care allowance.

In summary, both home care and day care are heavily subsidized in Finland. Individual municipalities have a lot of power to steer the demand for day care by paying generous supplements on top of the statutory cash-for-care subsidy. The eligibility criteria for the municipal supplements vary and can entail additional rules, such as the home care of all siblings in the family (Kosonen 2014). Therefore, it is impossible to give a generalized account on which one is more affordable in Finland, home care or day care. It depends highly on the complex combinations of individual characteristics, which are accounted for in the regression analysis of the substudies (see 5.3).

Subsidized day care provision has also been increasingly motivated by child development and, more recently, the human capital investment theory (Heckman 2000). The education perspective was largely absent from the traditional idea of providing care services in the 1970s in the Nordic countries. However, since the 1990s more attention has been paid to the educational activities and qualities of day care centres. In Nordic countries, statutory curricula for early education have been introduced (Campbell-Barr and Nygård 2014; Nygård et al. 2015). The stronger presence of educational aspects has been, at least partly, due to the empirical findings about the positive effects of high-quality day care. Next, this literature is reviewed.

5 Before August 2016, the subjective right was to full-time care, but since then it was restricted to part-time care if at least one of the parents is unemployed or on family leave (see Lundkvist et al. 2017). However, several major municipalities decided not to implement the restriction.

2.4 Evidence on the child effects of day care

The significance of early care on a child's later life is acknowledged widely among academia and public officials. However, the nuisance of studying the causal effect is the selection of care services which is likely to be correlated with unobserved characteristics of the family. Brilli et al. (2013) and Melhuish et al. (2015) have reviewed the few existing studies from Europe and also paid attention to their causal specification. As a summary, high-quality day care⁶ seems to affect children's development positively, with the strongest effect for the children with disadvantaged and immigrant backgrounds. In some studies and contexts, also negative effects have been observed, especially in the care of toddlers. (Brilli et al. 2013; Melhuish et al. 2015.)

The size of the effect depends greatly on the quality of the care mode, the age and family background of the child as well as the measured outcome. The available literature concentrates on centre-based day care of high quality which translates typically into high competence and education of the staff and a low child-teacher ratio. Evidence on other day care modes, such family day care, is scarcer.

The substitute for day care in the studies is typically parental care or care by relatives. Where the European literature concentrates on the effects of universal day care provision (Melhuish et al. 2015), literature from the US focuses on day care programmes targeted at children with disadvantaged backgrounds (see Gottfried and Kim 2015 for a review). Although the results of the two strands are mostly in line, the next chapter discusses results from the European context of universal programs. First, the general effects on children are discussed, and thereafter the evidence specifically on children with immigrant backgrounds is presented.

The measured short-term outcomes of day care attendance are typically divided to cognitive outcomes, such as school readiness and language skills, and non-cognitive, that is, behavioural and emotional outcomes. The majority of studies observe day care having a positive effect on the child's cognitive and language development, regardless of age (Melhuish et al. 2015). The effects are strongest for children with disadvantaged, low socio-economic backgrounds.

The most discrepancies can be found in the results of non-cognitive outcomes among children under the age of three (Melhuish et al. 2015). The negative findings are often explained through the attachment theory (Bowlby 1951) stating that early secure attachment to the mother is vital for the development of the child. The negative effects can occur if this relationship is undermined by extensive non-parental care at early ages. However, the few studies that examine children with disadvantaged back-

6 Day care is often referred to in literature as early childhood education and care services (ECEC). However, in this study a shorter, unabbreviated term 'day care' is used.

grounds separately, find a positive impact also on non-cognitive outcomes. (Melhuish et al. 2015.)

Although most of the literature revolves around children's short-term outcomes, a number of studies have examined the impacts of day care in the longer run (see Ruhm and Waldfogel 2012 for a review). One example comes from Felfe et al. (2015) who observe the positive effects of day care attendance on educational attainment at the age of 15. However, in most of the studies examining long-run effects, day care does not substitute parental care but other care modes, such as family day care or informal care by friends and relatives. In Denmark, Datta Gupta and Simonsen (2016) observe positive effects of day care attendance, as opposed to family day care, on educational attainment at the age of 15–16. In Norway, Havnes and Mogstad (2011) find that day care has a positive impact on the employment, family formation and welfare participation of children with disadvantaged backgrounds still at the age of 30. However, day care participation was, at the time, substituted mostly with informal care by friends and relatives.

The above-mentioned positive effects for children with disadvantaged backgrounds can be more or less extrapolated to immigrant families who are over-represented in the low end of income distribution (e.g. Ansala et al. 2016). In addition, some European studies from Norway and Germany have looked at the impact of universal day care on immigrants specifically (Drange and Telle 2010; Dustmann et al. 2013; Felfe and Lalive 2014; Drange and Telle 2015). The results are unanimously positive. Most of them examine the care of children above the age of three but Felfe and Lalive (2014) concentrate specifically on children under three years old. The measured outcomes include language skills, school success, motor skills and socio-emotional measures. Moreover, the study of Drange and Telle (2010) is a rare example of examining long-run effects on immigrant children. They find that day care participation increases the educational attainment of immigrants in Norway at the age of 16 but only among girls.

Although being relatively scarce, previous literature provides strong evidence of the beneficial impact of immigrants' participation in day care. Next, immigrants as a subject of study is introduced in more detail.

3 Immigrants

3.1 Immigrants as a subject of study

The definitions of “immigrant” vary and depend on the context. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines immigrant as “a person who comes to a country to take up permanent residence” (2018). This definition highlights the transnationality of the movement. Although migration can occur within a nation state, to be considered an immigrant, a person has to cross the border of a nation state. In addition, the definition underlines the permanency, or permanent intentions, of mobility. Tourists and other short-term migrants are therefore excluded from the definition.

In everyday discourse, immigrancy is a social structure, even a stigma that is often related to distinctive appearances. It is an othering discourse that separates “them” from “us”, the natives. Negative traits, such incompetence and untrustworthiness, are often related to a stereotype of immigrants (Lee and Fiske 2006). The stereotype of immigrants is closely related to ethnicity and therefore may be extended to the posterity of actual immigrants (Lee and Fiske 2006).

Despite of its somewhat negative connotation, the term “immigrant” is continuingly used in official documents, statistics and different fields of academia. However, some researchers and also official statistics prefer more subtle and exact terms with slightly different connotations such as “foreign-borns” or “people of ethnic minority or foreign-born backgrounds”. In the research at hand, I choose to continue using the term “immigrant” because it is still the most popular keyword when referring to mobile populations. Additionally, the use of the same term in popular discourse and academic research also makes the research more approachable to a wider audience.

The exact definition of immigrant in quantitative research has been based on various characteristics, such as a person’s first language, citizenship, and country of birth or parents’ countries of birth. The used definition depends largely on the availability of data and the purpose of use. However, the chosen definition can make a decisive difference. The registered first language, for instance, also includes descendants of foreign-borns to some extent. Like citizenship, it may also exclude foreign-borns who are more integrated and thus have changed their first language in registers to the majority language. As the availability of data has improved, more fitting definitions for various purposes can be used.

In this study, immigrants are defined as those born outside the borders of their current country of residence. Therefore, immigrancy is a permanent feature of an individual that does not go away with time. However, in the last two substudies an additional requirement of having a foreign first language is incorporated. This is done to exclude return migrants, that is, persons whose parents were native-borns but who were born abroad. Return migrants are often considered to be “less migrant” because

they may possess the host country's cultural knowledge; for instance, language skills that other immigrants have to make more effort to learn. The condition for foreign language was not applied in the first two substudies because of data limitations.

Immigrants draw the attention of social scientists for multiple reasons. Transnational mobile populations are in a distinct situation that does not trace back to any single feature. Their rights to, for example, employment or social security may be more limited than those of native-borns. However, this is less the case in the Nordic countries where entitlements are typically based on residence rather than citizenship or contribution history in the destination country (Sainsbury 2006).

Perhaps more importantly, immigrants' skills, social networks and cultural knowledge acquired in their origin country may not be useful and valued to the same extent in the labour markets of the destination country (Borjas 1994). Here, language skills are a key element, but also issues such as education and its transferability to the new context play a role. In addition, immigrants may be exposed to suspicious or even racist attitudes of the settled majority which results in labour market discrimination (e.g. Arai et al. 2016; Liebkind et al. 2016). All in all, insecure labour market attachment can be observed, on average, in various deficits such as lower salary, infrequent working hours, and temporary work contracts (Eurostat 2017b).

In the US, where immigration has been central to the nation's history, the study of ethnicity is more prevalent. Ethnic studies have a lot in common with European studies of immigrants, such as the effect of culture and discrimination. However, the two also have significant differences: the ethnic minorities are well-established in the US and the inequalities cannot be strictly traced back to features such as legal citizenship or language skills.

The study of immigrants tends to concentrate on the disadvantaged positions of immigrants although the group naturally contains huge variety. Above all, variety is produced and reflected by admission categories which work as selective filters set by immigration policies. Immigrants with different admission categories, such as labour, family, student and humanitarian migrants, have been found to demonstrate large differences in domains such as labour market integration. In the existing studies, labour migrants are typically well-off and near the employment levels of natives (e.g. Cobb-Clark 2000; Bratsberg et al. 2017). Other categories – for instance, family and humanitarian migrants – have typically lower labour market attachment (e.g. Cobb-Clark 2000; Bratsberg et al. 2017).

3.2 Integration of immigrants

The term 'integration' is usually used very vaguely and in multiple purposes. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines integration as a process of "incorporation as

equals into society or an organization of individuals of different groups, in other words, to make one thing to the level of the other” (2018).

In the context of immigration, the labour market dimension of integration is often of central interest in public and political debate as well as in academic disciplines. This is highlighted especially in the context of the welfare state whose extensive social security system requires a high level of employment. Against this background, it may not be surprising that labour market integration also drives public views on immigrants (Van Oorschot 2006).

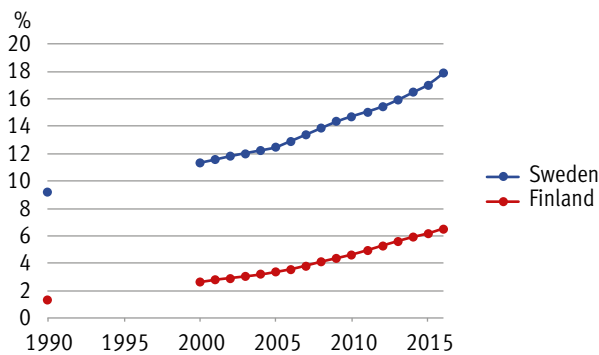
To make the concept more concrete, multiple typologies have been suggested. Most of them highlight the two-way nature of integration between the host society and the immigrant. The host society can enable and facilitate integration in multiple ways. For instance, Zetter et al. (2002) propose four clusters of indicators for integration: citizenship, governance, functional, and social indicators. The former two measure the foundations and facilitators of integration which are the responsibility of the host society. The citizenship dimension reflects the possibilities for attaining equal rights, or juridical integration. Governance refers to the design and extent of integration measures and services.

The latter two, functional and social domains, indicate the dimensions where immigrants are regarded as the actors. Functional integration is observed through socio-economic indicators such as employment levels, use of welfare benefits, housing and education. Last, the social domain indicates the social networks and bonds between the immigrants and the majority community.

In this research, integration is not a focus or an outcome of the research, but it works as the motivational concept of day care choice. Day care participation is often found to contribute to the school success and schooling of children with an immigrant background (see 2.4). School success and schooling can also be regarded as indicators of functional integration.

3.3 Immigrants in Finland and Sweden

The immigrant populations in Finland and Sweden share many common features such as the high proportion of humanitarian migrants. Nonetheless, they have a number of dissimilarities. Sweden has a more extensive immigration history, whereas Finland was a country of emigration until the 1990s. Although immigration to Finland has increased since, the extensive difference in the proportion of the migrant population between the two countries has persisted (Figure 2, p. 25).

Figure 2. The proportion of foreign-born population in Finland and Sweden 1990–2016.

Source: Statistics Finland and Statistics Sweden 2017.

The migration patterns of the two countries have intertwined as at the turn of the 1970s the oversupply of workers in Finland led to high flows of labour migrants to Sweden in particular. Only at the start of the 1990s, changes in immigration policy and the disintegration of the Soviet Union turned Finland's net migration positive. Finland then faced simultaneous immigration flows from neighbouring Russia and Estonia, as well as refugee migrants from more distant countries, such as Yugoslavia and Somalia. Migrants from Russia were mostly Ingrian Finns with centuries-old Finnish ancestry (Dhalmann and Yousfi 2010). At the turn of the millennium, Finland received refugees increasingly from Iraq, Somalia and Afghanistan. In addition, a growing number of migrants moved from other European Union countries (Statistics Finland 2017).

In Sweden, the arrival of refugees from Germany and from the neighbouring Nordic and Baltic countries already at the end of World War II turned the country into an immigration country. At the end of the 1960s, emigration from Finland increased drastically, whereas labour migration from outside of the Nordic countries decreased under the effect of new immigration policy. Refugees from Chile in particular continued to come intermittently. (Allwood et al. 2006.)

The mid-1980s saw the beginning of decades of refugee flows to Sweden: first from Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey and Eritrea, and at the end of the decade, from Somalia, Kosovo, and the countries of the former Eastern Communist Bloc. During the 1990s, with the breakdown of Yugoslavia, 100,000 individuals from the Balkans – mainly Bosnians – found a new home in Sweden. After the turn of the millennium, immigration from Iraq and within Europe started to rise again. (Lundh 2005; Statistics Sweden 2017.)

As presented in Table 1, the largest immigrant groups in Sweden in 2016 originated from Finland, Syria and Iraq (Statistics Sweden 2017). In Finland, most immigrants were born in neighbouring Russia and Estonia, followed by immigrants from Sweden and Iraq. The immigrants from Sweden were mostly Finnish descendants. (Statistics Finland 2017.) What stands out from Table 1 is that the population proportions of the largest immigrant groups are not that different between Finland and Sweden. The biggest difference lies in the prevalence of the group “Other”, implying that Sweden has a more diverse immigrant population than Finland.

Table 1. Finnish and Swedish resident populations by countries of birth and gender in 2016.

Finland				Sweden			
Percentage of men		Percentage of women		Percentage of men		Percentage of women	
Finland	93.2	Finland	93.8	Sweden	82.2	Sweden	82.0
Soviet Union/Russia	1.0	Soviet Union/Russia	1.5	Syria	1.7	Finland	1.9
Estonia	0.8	Estonia	0.8	Iraq	1.4	Iraq	1.3
Sweden	0.6	Sweden	0.6	Finland	1.2	Syria	1.2
Iraq	0.3	Thailand	0.3	Poland	0.8	Poland	1.0
Somalia	0.2	China	0.2	Iran	0.7	Iran	0.7
Other	3.8	Other	2.8	Other	11.8	Other	11.9

Source: Statistics Finland (2017) and Statistics Sweden (2017).

The distributions of origins vary slightly between genders in Table 1. Among men in Finland, typical refugee origins are over-represented, whereas Thailand and China, typical sources of family migration, are more common origins among women. In Sweden, the distributions across genders are more symmetric.

3.4 Labour market integration of immigrants in Finland and Sweden

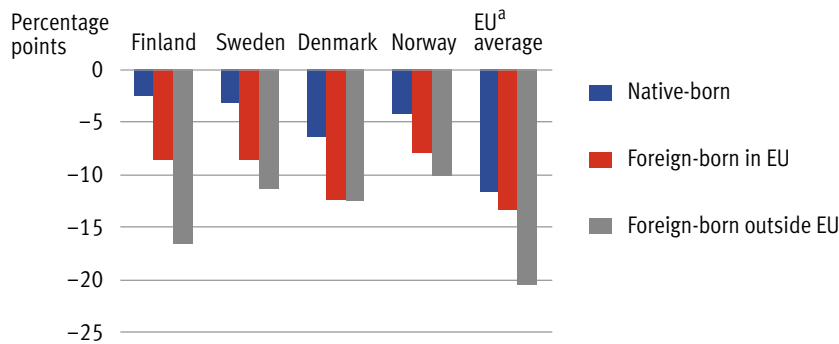
Finland and especially Sweden are countries with high labour force participation rates, but the immigrant-native gaps are among the highest in Europe (Eurostat 2017a). This is regardless of the labour market integration of unemployed immigrants being facilitated with a universal provision of language teaching and other integration measures, which are proven to be effective (Sarvimäki and Hämäläinen 2016).

The employment rates vary largely by country of origin, partly reflecting the admission categories. Migrants from typical refugee origins, such as the Middle East, are the most disadvantaged groups in the labour markets of both countries (Statistics Sweden 2009; Busk et al. 2016). However, migrants from former Yugoslavia seem to be an exception in this regard, faring relatively well in Swedish labour markets. Migrants from other Nordic countries and Central Europe are the ones faring the best (Statistics Sweden 2009). The employment rates of immigrants converge to those of

native-borns with years in the country, however, with persisting gaps still after ten or even twenty years of residence (Statistics Sweden 2009; Sarvimäki 2011).

In both countries, immigrant women seem to lag behind the men in employment levels as well as labour market participation rates (Figure 3; Eurostat 2017a). The origins of the wider gender gaps among immigrants are complex and trace partly back to the equality circumstances in the origin countries (Antecol 2000). In addition, immigrant women's lower participation rates are, presumably, to some extent explained by differences in age distribution and accentuated fertility after migration, a pattern found in international studies (e.g. Mussino and Strozza 2012; Adserà et al. 2012). Similarly, Nieminen (2015) has found that being on child care leave was a major reason why immigrant women were not actively looking for work in Finland.

Figure 3. Gender gaps in labour market participation rate by country of birth for individuals aged 25–59 in 2016 (ref. males).



a EU refers to the area of current 28 EU member states.

Source: Eurostat 2017a.

4 Determinants of care choices

4.1 Individual preferences or structural constraints?

A child's parents typically hold the power of decision concerning child care modes in contemporary welfare states. In this study, child care choices are observed through families' take-up of family benefits. However, take-up or non-take-up is an imperfect indicator of the actual choice. Take-up may occur even if no actual choice has been made, given that choice is considered an active process where the actor chooses from more than one possible option. The actor may not have relevant information about the options or may have received distorted information, which may then lead to distorted choices that would not have occurred in other contexts. On the other hand, full awareness exists only theoretically and the degree of awareness is bound to vary individually (see Hogarth 1987 for discussion).

Awareness and information provision on services may be especially critical for immigrants' choices because they may suffer from a language barrier or a lack of "cultural knowledge" and useful information networks. To fix this, many social insurance institutions have started to provide information on benefits in many languages. However, the most comprehensive information in Finland and Sweden is still provided in the official national language(s) and English. Information in other languages may be available to a smaller extent and via special services, such as remote video services or interpretation. The limits of take-up as a measure of choice are further scrutinized in 7.3.

Given the awareness about the options, different disciplines have proposed theoretical framings for dividing household labour as well as choosing child care modes. In economics, perhaps the most well-known theorist is Becker (1981), who sees the household as a single unit maximizing its utility. Here, utility should be understood as the preferences and satisfaction of the household and it may include features, such as the financial situation or overall welfare of household members. According to Becker (1981), even small differences in comparative advantages and human capitals of household members – such as "advantages of women in the birth and child rearing" – automatically lead to the specialization of household members when they maximize the household utility.

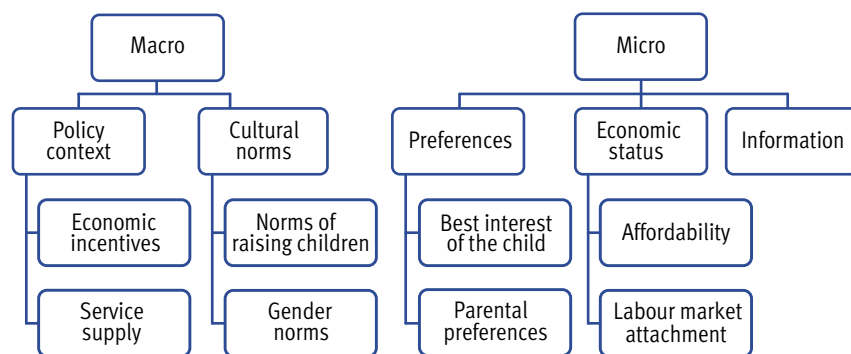
Sociologists, in turn, concentrate on social structures, gender being the most central one in the case of care choice (e.g. Coltrane 2000). Gender entails a power structure and a set of norms to which an individual is expected to conform. Some of the norms may relate explicitly to the division of household labour and some of them, for example occupational choice, may affect it indirectly. However, an individual does not take on the roles passively but rather negotiates with it in the process of socialization (Parsons and Bales 1956). Therefore, they are subject to change. More recently, West and Zimmermann (1987) have emphasized gender as an everyday routine and recurring

accomplishment, which they call “doing gender”. From this perspective, gendered care choices can be viewed as active representations of gender.

Figure 4 presents one typology of care choice determinants. It combines aspects from both economic and sociological literature. First, it is useful to distinguish macro- and micro-level determinants which naturally interact with each other. Macro-level policy systems (see Chapter 2) steer individual- and household-level behaviour, for instance, by changing economic incentives (see Kosonen 2014 for Finnish example). In addition to the economic incentives of cash benefits, the many aspects of day care services are worth highlighting. Literature distinguishes availability factors, such as day care fees, locations and opening hours, and also quality and desirability factors, such as staff accreditation, child-teacher ratio or how the child’s cultural background is accounted for (Leseman 2002). These features appeal to different subgroups of the population in relation to their individual needs and preferences.

The second major entity affecting the choices are norms. Cultural norms are defined as the standard behaviour in a social group or culture (Parsons 1951). The social groups can be formed by, for example, social class or in this case ethnicity. The norms determining care choices may relate to how parents should divide their household tasks (Coltrane 2000), or how they should raise their child (Bornstein 1991).

Figure 4. Determinants of (immigrants’) care choices.



Source: Author’s compilation from Leseman (2002) and other cited sources.

Policy tools, such as paid parental leave or subsidized day care provision, also affect norms and standards of behaviour in society (Kotsadam and Finseraas 2011). On the other hand, in order to be introduced, policies in democratic societies need to reflect the prevailing norms to some extent (Burstein 2003). Therefore, the norms among recent immigrants may be more contradictory to the norms promoted through the established policy system.

Norms are not fixed, however, and they may change during one's life. According to classic functionalist theory (Parsons and Bales 1956), social norms are internalized mainly in the process of primary socialization which occurs before and during adolescence. An important part of socialization is sex-typing and gender socialization where individuals learn the behaviour considered appropriate for a given sex (Parsons and Bales 1956). However, later scholars have emphasized that, although the development is concentrated on early formative years, norms for gendered behaviour and child rearing can be modified across one's life span (Katz and Ksansnak 1994).

In addition to norms on a cultural level, norms and preferences vary on an individual level. Discourse which emphasizes the role of the individual actor rather than social structures is tightly related to the individualization of modern societies and the notion of freedom of choice (Kangas and Rostgaard 2007). Perhaps the most famous proponent of individual preference discourse regarding the care choice has been Hakim (1998 and 2000). According to Hakim's general preference theory, there are three kinds of women with different preferences: those who pursue careers, those who prefer caring for the child at home, and those who are in-between, adaptive individuals most responsive to the incentives (1998 and 2000). Hakim's theory is often criticized for many problems, such as putting too light an emphasis on structural issues (e.g. Kangas and Rostgaard 2007), downplaying men's heterogeneity and leaving the origins of women's preferences obscure (Crompton and Harris 1998).

In addition, Hakim's theory does not discuss parents' preferences and views on the best interest of the child. It is known that parents who value the educational features of early care are more likely to use those services. Moreover, views on the best interest of the child and the feasibility of available options are affected by the information provided by child health clinics, media and informal networks (Boneva and Rauh 2016).

Last, the incentives and opportunities to make certain choices naturally depend on the individual- and household-level economic context. The number of parents in the family and the labour market attachment and wage levels of the parents are theoretically and empirically found to drive care choices. Moreover, what is not visible in Figure 4 is that a care choice typically concerns two adults. Classic economic theory regarded household as the unit of utility optimization (Becker 1965), but more recently optimization on the individual level has been emphasized (e.g. Silvennoinen 2008). In the situation of contradicting preferences or cultural norms, the problem is negotiated between parents. The negotiation powers between parents are determined by the differences in income but also by prevailing gender norms (Brines 1994; Meier and Rainer 2017).

All aforementioned determinants have special connotations to immigrants who are, keeping the heterogeneity in mind, often characterized by a distinct labour market

situation and cultural values (Leseman 2002). Next, I will review the empirical literature on care choices in immigrant families.

4.2 Empirical evidence

4.2.1 Division of leave in immigrant families

Mothers have traditionally used a lion's share of the care leaves. Recently, as an outcome of active promotion through policies, the fathers' share has increased in several countries (see OECD 2016 for an overview). However, the use of parental leave has gained popularity mainly in certain subgroups of fathers, such as men with higher education and income (Sundström and Duvander 2002). Moreover, previous research from Sweden has shown substantial immigrant-native gaps in fathers' use of parental leave (Duvander 2010). Immigrant fathers seem to have less possibilities to make use of the flexibility of the Swedish parental leave (Duvander 2013). However, their leave use has been noted to increase with time spent in the destination country, indicating an adaptation to the leave-use pattern of native-born fathers, at least in Sweden (Mussino et al. 2016).

Similarly to native-borns, the reason for immigrant fathers' lower take-up rates has been explained by three issues presented in Figure 4: a distinct economic context, cultural norms and an information deficit. However, the impact of these have not been studied explicitly among immigrants. Therefore, in the following, the implications for immigrant families are discussed on the basis of literature on fathers in general.

Traditionally, fathers' use or non-use of parental leave has been associated with their socio-economic background (e.g. Sundström and Duvander 2002). The fathers who have a steady income and employment are more likely to use the leave. Also the employer's attitude, and therefore the father's occupational field, have been found to play a role (Haas et al. 2002). Fathers employed in public administration and female-majority workplaces use the leave the most (Bygren and Duvander 2006; Saarikallio-Torp and Haataja 2016; Närvi 2018).

In addition to reasons related to the economic context and employment, some surveys point to traditional gender views that hinder fathers' take-up (Duvander 2014; Salmi and Lammi-Taskula 2015). For instance, in their survey of Finnish fathers, Salmi and Lammi-Taskula (2015) found that the main reason for fathers' non-take-up of benefits in general lay not in the family's finances but in the prevailing gender norms. Moreover, immigrants have often been found to possess more traditional gender attitudes reflecting the traditional gender systems of their origin countries. The gap in attitudes narrows down as the length of stay increases. (Röder and Mühlau 2014; Frank and Hou 2015.)

Unawareness of available services or benefits may affect especially immigrants' choices. Salmi and Lammi-Taskula (2015) show that about a fifth of all fathers were not even aware of the Finnish two-week period reserved for fathers in 2006. In Sweden as well, it seems that fathers – and perhaps immigrant fathers especially – lack knowledge of their leave rights (National Social Insurance Board 2003).

Moving to the policy level, the role of policy design in immigrant fathers' take-up of parental leave has been nearly absent in academic literature. The only related study by Kvande and Brandth (2017) is an interview study of middle-class European migrants in Norway. They spoke highly of the earmarked non-transferability of leaves. However, the sample of fathers was small and selected, and the results cannot be generalized.

Based on the theoretical discussion above, one could expect that a policy feature such as earmarked leave could be effective in increasing immigrant fathers' use. Earmarking increases the economic incentives to use the leave because if the father does not use it, it will be lost. Thus earmarking may facilitate overcoming barriers, such as weaker labour market attachment of the father or distinct cultural norms in immigrant families. Moreover, the flexibility of leave use, that is, the possibility to postpone the leave or use it part-time, can be of pertinent importance to fathers who are in a precarious or rigid work situation – a group where immigrant men are over-represented (Eurostat 2017b).

4.2.2 Day care participation of children with immigrant backgrounds

The second examined outcome in this study is the use of the cash-for-care subsidy in Finland. A statutory cash-for-care subsidy is a comparatively rare kind of benefit (Blum et al. 2017) and there is scarce literature examining its use among immigrant families. In Norway, Hardoy and Schøne (2010) have examined cash-for-care's effect on immigrant women's labour force participation, but few studies have concentrated on the take-up per se. However, in the empirical specifications of this study (see 5.3), the use of cash-for-care can be translated well into not using the day care services. Therefore, the literature examining children's participation in day care services and its determinants is reviewed in the following.

Leseman (2002) extensively reviews older US and European literature on day care participation of children with immigrant or minority backgrounds, whereas Lazzari and Vandenbroeck (2012) have concentrated on the few more recent examples from Europe. Despite the fact that US literature concentrates on ethnic differences and participation in targeted day care programs such as Head Start, nearly all reviewed studies show that children with low-income, immigrant or minority backgrounds are under-represented in different kinds of day care services, especially at ages 0–3. The gaps have been found to diminish at older ages.

To a large extent, the observed immigrant-native gaps have been traced to the distinct economic context of immigrant families. In many existing studies from the US (e.g. Kahn and Greenberg 2010; Karoly and Gonzalez 2011) but also from Nordic countries (Krapf 2014), the gaps diminish or even disappear when differences in maternal employment and household income are controlled for. The strong association between maternal employment after birth and the child's day care participation is trivial in many contexts, such as Finland, where parental care and day care are strong substitutes and use of other care modes, such as family day care and care by relatives, is relatively rare. Therefore, controlling for it can be regarded over-controlling and even lead to endogeneity problems in some contexts.

Independently from parental employment, the observed strong association of household income with day care participation has been interpreted to reflect affordability issues. This is largely the case in contexts where day care is weakly subsidized and fees are comparatively high. Therefore both reviews, Leseman (2002) and Lazzari and Vandenbroeck (2012), give policy recommendations to lower day care fees in order to increase the day care participation of children with low-income and immigrant backgrounds. Lazzari and Vandenbroeck (2012) refer to a Nordic-style policy of universal access to day care services possibly being a way to level out the socio-economic and ethnic differences in day care participation.

In addition to labour market attachment and economic context, survey-based and qualitative research points out that preferences and views on child development are also eminent in child care decision-making. Liang et al. (2000) show that parental beliefs about child development and literacy explained a significant part of inter-ethnic variation in day care participation. Moreover, Boneva and Rauh (2016) found that parental beliefs about child development patterns at a certain age are a major determinant of parental investment. The authors conclude that information treatments, that is, informing parents about the benefits of early investment, would result in greater gains especially in low-income families. Although the study concentrated on parental investment on the child, correcting beliefs about the benefits of day care would presumably have similar effects. Moreover, parents' developmental views are related strongly to the child's age, and therefore they may partly explain the finding why the immigrant-native gap in day care participation narrows down with age.

Many ethnic minority parents have been found to prefer day care centres where the staff holds the relevant language skills and cultural knowledge (Miller et al. 2013; Miller et al. 2014; Lastikka and Lipponen 2016). Perhaps somewhat contrary to the integrational aspects, this point underlines the parents' urge to cherish their own culture and pass it on to their offspring. In addition, Leseman (2002) refers to interview studies that observe how gender norms regarding child rearing, or seeing the mother as the primary caregiver, drives the care choice. Similarly, Pehkonen (2006) observes

that in some cultural contexts the mother's pursuit for employment is not regarded appropriate, at least if the father is also unemployed.

Many US studies discuss the role of acculturation, or the merging of one's culture into another (Berry 1995), in choosing the care mode. Miller et al. (2013) and Johnson et al. (2017) found that parental English proficiency increased the probability of choosing centre-based care. They interpret this a sign of acculturation among parents. However, Johnson et al. (2017) also discuss that the effect of English proficiency may relate to increased information and awareness about services among parents.

Lastly, in their interview study Wall and São José (2004) noted that the availability of services at unusual working hours may have accentuated the importance for immigrant families. Immigrants are known to be over-represented in low-wage workers who are more likely to be working irregular shifts, nights and weekends (Matthews and Ewen 2006). In this case, the unavailability of services may result in relying on informal care from relatives, for example, or alternatively, refusing the irregular job opportunities and staying at home.

5 Empirical specifications

5.1 Aims and research questions

As presented in Chapter 2, certain care choices are preferable from the welfare state's point of view; a more gender-equal use of parental leave levels out the gender differences in child care as well as in labour force participation. In addition, participation in day care contributes to the development of children, especially with immigrant backgrounds.

The aim of the research is to describe and examine immigrant families' care choices and their determinants in Finnish and Swedish welfare state contexts. Do immigrants make choices in a way that is considered preferable? How much heterogeneity is there between immigrants from different origins? To what extent are the differences explained by differences in labour market attachment? Are there signs of different preferences and norms? And finally, what is the impact of certain policy elements? The study is divided into four substudies which deal with two care choices. Table 2 presents the key facts of the substudies.

Table 2. Key facts of the substudies.

	Substudy I	Substudy II	Substudy III	Substudy IV
Examined choice	The gender division of child care	The gender division of child care	The choice between child home care and day care	The choice between child home care and day care
Specific question	The role of policy design in immigrant fathers' use of parental leave	The determinants of cross-country differences in fathers' use of parental leave	Immigrant-native differences in the length of home care spells	Immigrant-native differences in the care choice of the older sibling when the younger sibling is looked after at home
Context	Finland and Sweden	Finland and Sweden	Finland	Finland
Empirical specification	Analyzing cross-country differences in take-up rates and national policy reforms	Comparing take-up rates of the stagnant and migrant populations as well as the differences by age at migration and origin of spouse	Analyzing the length of cash-for care spells and the role of socio-economic factors	Analyzing the take-up of the sibling supplement and the role of socio-economic factors among cash-for-care recipients
Regression method	Linear probability model	Linear probability model	Proportional hazard model with correlated variance structure	Logistic model with correlated variance structure
Register data pool ^a	LAPE and STAR	LAPE and STAR	LAPE	LAPE

^a See Table 3 for further information on the data and immigrant groupings in the substudies.

The first two substudies revolve around the comparison of fathers' parental leave use in Finland and Sweden. Substudy I examines immigrant fathers' use of paternity and parental leave, and analyses the role of policy design. Substudy II takes a broader angle and analyses the role of policy design and norms in fathers' parental leave use generally by using migration between Finland and Sweden as an instrument.

The last two substudies form the second set, which concerns the use of cash-for-care among immigrant families in Finland with different age and family contexts. Substudy III examines the length of cash-for-care spells when the child is less than three years old, that is, the general entitlement age for cash-for-care in Finland. Substudy IV concentrates on the use of the cash-for-care sibling supplement which can be paid for other siblings in the family until they reach school age at the age of seven, given that they have a younger sibling that is looked after at home with cash-for-care. In other words, the last substudy focuses on child care choice in a situation where the parent is at home on child care leave in any case.

In the following, the empirical specification used to answer the questions above is presented in more detail. An introduction of the data will be followed with a discussion on the methods.

5.2 Data

The first two substudies incorporate data from two countries, Finland and Sweden. The last two substudies concern Finland and are based solely on Finnish data. The Finnish data of all four substudies are based on the same administrative register data pool on births during 1999–2009. It is a sixty percent random sample of all mothers who gave birth during the period (see Juutilainen 2016 for details). The data were originally compiled for the research project “Families with children” (LAPE), a collaboration between the Social Insurance Institution of Finland and the University of Turku. The main outcome of the project is available in Finnish in Haataja et al. (2016)⁷. The Swedish data incorporated in the first two substudies are compiled from the “Sweden over Time: Activities and Relations” (STAR) data pool. It contains extensive information on the total population of Sweden.

The data for the first two substudies are compiled from the father's perspective. Each observation is formed by the first child of the father, and therefore one family has only one observation. The data for the last two substudies are compiled from the child's and the mother's perspective. Each child forms one observation, and they are further clustered according to the mother. Moreover, the first two substudies concentrate on households with two parents whereas the last two substudies incorporate all family types including single parents. The former restriction was made to increase comparability between Finland and Sweden that differ in respect to single fathers'

7 For a summary in English, see <http://hdl.handle.net/10138/163822>.

eligibility for parental leave (see 2.2). The family composition is deduced at a certain age of the child and it depends on the studied benefit. For instance, in Substudy III the family composition is measured at the end of the year when the child turned two, which is roughly the average age of using cash-for-care.

In all substudies immigrants are defined as foreign-borns. To rule out foreign-borns with a native background, the last two substudies also require a native language other than Finnish. However, this condition could not be used in the comparative studies with Sweden due to limitations in the data. In the first two substudies, which deal with fathers' use of parental leave, the immigrant status is deduced from the father's origin. In the last two substudies, the mother's country of origin is used to determine the immigrant status. In all substudies the immigrant status of the spouse is also considered in regression analysis.

The examined outcome in all substudies, the take-up of family benefits, is based on administrative information from the registers of social security institutions. The covariate of interest is immigrant origin. In all substudies, immigrants are divided into subgroups by their country of birth to bring out the prevailing heterogeneity. The data frequencies and the used groupings are presented in Table 3. Substudy I distinguishes four detailed immigrant groups and two more vague groups. The motive for the detailed grouping is to enable accurate comparison between the two countries. The grouping in Substudy II is fixed by the research question which concerns only native-borns and migrants between Finland and Sweden. The last two substudies use four relatively large groups of immigrants. The typical refugee countries are deduced on the basis of additional information on the reason for migration (see Substudy III for more info).

Table 3. Data frequencies and origin categories by substudy.

Substudy I			Substudy II			Substudy III		Substudy IV	
Cohorts 1999–2009			Cohorts 1999–2009			Cohorts 1999–2007		Cohorts 1999–2006	
Father's origin	Number of children		Father's origin	Number of children		Mother's origin	Number of children	Mother's origin	Number of children
	Finland	Sweden		Finland	Sweden				
Native	124,274	336,563	Native	124,274	336,563	Native	284,428	Native	103,216
Former Yugoslavia	384	9,224	Sweden/ Finland	1,748	2,483	OECD	1,658	OECD	666
Horn of Africa	179	1,432				FSU ^a	4,935	FSU ^a	1,398
Iraq	297	7,384				Refugee	4,572	Refugee	2,425
Turkey	329	2,497				Other	2,467	Other	827
Western	1,524	8,904							
Other	2,916	16,546							

^a Former Soviet Union.

Characteristic to register-based research, the number of observations is relatively high in the studied groups. The smallest groups can be found in Substudy I, which uses detailed grouping. The size of immigrant groups in the Swedish data outnumber those in the Finnish data because the immigrant population is more prevalent in Sweden and the Swedish data consist of the total population.

In addition to the immigrant origin of the parent, the length of stay in the new host country is a secondary covariate of interest in Substudies I, III and IV. The aim is to examine if and how fast the choices of immigrant families start to resemble those of native-born families. In Substudy II, the central focus is on the father's age at the time of migration rather than the length of stay, however, the length of stay being considered as a control variable.

All substudies implement a wide set of control variables to find out the extent to which the differences in care choices can be explained by the observed characteristics of immigrants. Subsequently, the data are complemented with detailed information from tax and population registers. The controlled covariates are roughly the same in all studies but vary in detail. All substudies control for the child's birth year, the parents' economic status before the birth, and the immigrant status of the spouse. In addition, the last two substudies consider the household composition – that is, the number of previous children and the number of parents in the household – and the local setting, such as the local unemployment rate and the availability of a cash-for-care municipal supplement. All studies except Substudy III control for the age of the parents.

Because the register data pool was fixed, the number of the birth cohorts varies depending on the studied outcome (see Table 3). The benefits that can be used over a long age range, such as the cash-for-care sibling supplement in Substudy IV, require longer follow-ups and are therefore studied with fewer birth cohorts. The parental benefits (Substudies I and II) are studied with the shortest examination period, although during the study period parents in Sweden could extend or postpone their use of parental benefits over an eight-year period. For simplification, we chose to follow the fathers' use of parental benefits in Sweden only during the birth year and two consecutive years. As most of the leave is used during the first two years (see Swedish Social Insurance Agency 2017), the binary benefit take-up is not largely affected by the truncation.

In addition, in the Swedish data the parental benefit is not observed per child but per parent. Multi-child families may have had more days of parental leave available during the follow-up, which in turn increases the probability of fathers taking leave. Consequently, we ran a validation test by controlling for the additional births during the two follow-up years. The changes in the immigrant gaps are negligible. Because of this, and due to the fact that the decision to have consecutive children can be seen

as endogenous to the father's take-up of leave, we focus only on the results in which the additional children were not controlled for.

5.3 Methods

In Substudies I, II and IV, the take-up of benefits is measured by a binary indicator (0/1). In the first two, this is done to facilitate the comparison of regression coefficients of the two very different leave systems. In Substudy IV, the focus on the binary indicator is justified by the finding that the use of the sibling supplement is very polarized: it is used either for all eligible months or none. Substudy III, in turn, focuses on the length of cash-for-care spells, because a large majority – 90 percent of families – use the benefit and the greatest variation is therefore in the length of spells.

The first two substudies infer the role of policies by comparing the behaviour of immigrants and native-borns in Finnish and Swedish policy systems. Substudy I relies additionally on the analysis of national policy reforms. The last two studies concentrate on describing the care choices in different age and family contexts. Moreover, all four substudies survey the impact of socio-economic and demographic factors on the outcomes. The factors were disentangled through regression analysis, which is the most suitable and commonly used method for the purpose. The exact regression method used varies by studied outcome and research in question.

The data used in the two comparative studies are unpooled, which slightly complicates the analysis and statistical inference. This is the reason why Substudies I and II incorporate linear probability models (LPM) instead of the more common logistic regression. LPM is slightly more robust to the omitted variable bias than logistic models when comparing two unpooled samples from different populations (Mood 2010). In addition, LPM coefficients are easier to interpret in situations where the event rates differ significantly between the two samples (Hellevik 2009), which is the case of take-up rates of father's leaves in Finland and Sweden. Substudy IV, which concentrates solely on one national data pool, incorporates logistic regression to analyse the use of the sibling supplement of cash-for-care.

Substudy III, which focuses on the length of home care spells, incorporates Cox's proportional hazard model (Cox 1972). This option was preferred to other choices, for example ordinary least squares, due to its ability to account for spell censoring. Cash-for-care spells are an imperfect measure of home care because they may also come to an end for other reasons than the end of actual home care. Such reasons include the start of a maternity benefit due to a subsequent pregnancy or reaching the age limit of cash-for-care. These two reasons are considered in the analysis as causes for spell censoring. In rarer occasions, spells may also cease and home care continue if the parent decides to transfer to an unemployment benefit. However, transferring from cash-for-care to unemployment before reaching the age limit of three is very rare

(own calculations). Mothers who were unemployed before giving birth are observed to have higher risks for longer cash-for-care spells (Haataja and Juutilainen 2014).

The first two substudies analyse only one observation per father, the parental leave use with the first child. Therefore ordinary linear probability models are implemented. The analyses in the last two substudies incorporate multiple observations (children) per mother. This may result in some bias due to the timing of variables. For instance, family income before the birth of the second child may be affected by the care choice of the first child. However, this bias was mitigated by controlling the number of previous children in regression.

Including multiple children per mother in the analysis results in correlated observations due to unobserved characteristics. In Substudies III and IV, the correlation was taken into account by implementing so called population average models based on general estimation equations (GEE, see Liang and Zeger 1986). More specifically, in Substudy III the correlation is accounted for by implementing the so-called marginal Cox model with robust sandwich covariance matrix (see Gharibvand and Liu 2009). In Substudy IV, a GEE with exchangeable correlation structure is used (Liang and Zeger 1986). In other words, correlations between the choices of the same mother are assumed to be equal in all families.

An alternative approach would have been to implement a mixed effects model that estimates the response conditional to the covariates of each individual cluster. However, no strong arguments for choosing either GEEs or mixed models exist in this case. Whereas mixed models may be more commonly used in social sciences, they also come with some unverifiable assumptions (see Hubbard et al. 2010 for discussion). Therefore, estimates on population average models are presented⁸.

To present the results, two distinct strategies are used. While Substudies I and III rely on showing the raw regression coefficients and relative risks, Substudies II and IV employ population marginal means where controls are held at population means (Searle et al. 1980).

8 In the publication of Substudy III it was erroneously stated that a mixed model was used. Afterwards, both specifications were tested. The results showed similar patterns.

6 Findings

6.1 Promoting parental leave for immigrant fathers. What role does policy play? (Substudy I)

Gender differences in parental leave use and labour force participation are accentuated in immigrant populations in Sweden (see 3.4 and 4.2.1). Earlier evidence from Finland points out that looking after a child at home is a major reason for immigrant women's absence from labour markets (Nieminen 2015). Moreover, we know that immigrant families, mostly mothers, use cash-for-care for longer periods than families with a native background (Substudy III).

This study examines whether certain policy features are effective in levelling out the gendered differences in leave use among immigrants. We compare two distinct policy contexts, Finland and Sweden, and analyse the impacts of three policy reforms that took place during the 2000s.

Our study hypothesis asserted that earmarking and flexibility in how the leave can be used play an important role for immigrant fathers. Therefore, we expect the immigrant fathers' parental leave use to be on a much higher level in Sweden than Finland. On the other hand, the access to paternity leave in Sweden is more limited, concerning only fathers in labour markets. Subsequently, we expect the immigrant fathers' use of paternity leaves to be higher in Finland than in Sweden.

Results for fathers' use of parental leave are mainly in line with the hypothesis. The immigrant-native gaps in using the leave are much narrower in Sweden, and the difference between countries does not go away after controlling for labour market factors. Furthermore, analysis of policy reforms indicates that, in Sweden, extending the fathers' quota increased immigrant fathers' take-up to a varying extent. However, Finnish reforms of introducing a conditional quota or increasing flexibility (see 2.2) increased only the take-up of native-born fathers and fathers from OECD countries.

Contrary to expectations, the results for paternity leave show that immigrant fathers in Finland and Sweden use the leave at similar levels despite the more restricted access in Sweden. The result may be due to differences in promoting the leave and providing information more actively in Sweden. The Swedish social insurance agency has rolled out several media campaigns to promote fathers' use of the leave in general.

Lastly, immigrant fathers in both countries demonstrate adaptation to the behaviour of native-born fathers as their stay in the host country grows longer. Most of the adaptive trend could be explained through labour market integration. However, a small but statistically significant adaptation effect existed also after including controls, perhaps reflecting increased awareness about the leaves.

The somewhat contradicting results from Finnish and Swedish policy reforms leave some room for speculation. At the time of study, the Finnish parental leave system did not incorporate an independent fathers' quota. This may be the key reason why the reforms impacted only few subgroups of fathers. An alternative reason may lie in unawareness of the leave, which has been very prevalent among fathers in Finland generally (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula 2015). It may be that immigrants in Finland were less aware about the existence of a leave scheme for fathers.

6.2 Decomposing the determinants of fathers' parental leave use. Evidence from migration between Finland and Sweden (Substudy II)

This study sets out to widen the perspective of Substudy I and to understand the general mechanisms behind the cross-country differences in fathers' parental leave use. More specifically, we strive to disentangle two possible macro-level determinants: policy design and cultural norms. We use the immigration experience as a quasi-experimental setting where we can decompose the two factors. The study focuses on native-born fathers in Finland and Sweden who are compared to fathers who have migrated between the two countries. The parental leave schemes between the two countries differ significantly and divergence in gender norms is also visible in cross-country surveys, where the Swedish population demonstrates more egalitarian norms (e.g. Ylikännö et al. 2016).

First, by looking at the fathers with the same origin and other observed characteristics in different policy contexts, we infer the role of policy. Second, we examine the role of norms by examining fathers who have migrated at different ages and fathers with spouses of different origins. The former approach is based on the assumption that social norms are internalized typically in youth through a socialization process. By looking at fathers who have migrated at different ages, we estimate whether they underwent their socialization process in their origin or destination country. Moreover, we expect that couples with mixed origins possess ingredients of social norms from both origins. Therefore, if norms matter, fathers' use of parental leave in mixed couples are expected to fall in between the homogeneous couples.

The results suggest that, in the context of Finland and Sweden, the policy system seems to have a more decisive role than norms for the differences in fathers' use of parental leave. This is inferred from the finding that immigrant fathers demonstrate almost identical take-up rates with the fathers in the destination rather than fathers in their origin. However, keeping confounding factors controlled, the age at immigration seems to also determine the take-up, which is in line with the socialization hypothesis. Also the association with the spouse's origin shows a pattern that is mostly in line with the socialization hypothesis. The effect is clearest in the use of the fathers' quota in Sweden: mixed couples, that is, couples where the father and mother are of different origins, demonstrate take-up rates that fall in between couples where both parents are of Finnish or Swedish origin.

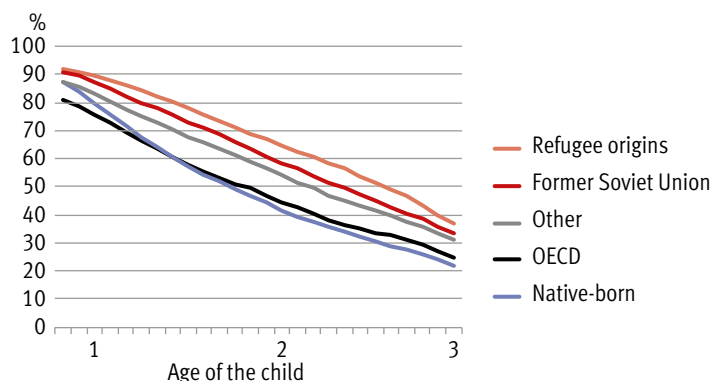
Naturally the results retrieved from this context cannot be generalized as such in other contexts. The differences in gender norms between Finland and Sweden exist but are minor in the European context, not to mention globally (e.g. World Economic Forum 2015). Despite the evident restriction to the context, the study gives first evidence on the relative role of policy and norms in cross-country differences of fathers' parental leave use. Methodologically, it is an encouraging example of using the immigrant experience to decompose the two factors. However, the method can be applied in countries that have introduced the examined policy schemes. In addition, the specification does not allow strict causal conclusions because the decision to migrate, the age at migration and the selection of a spouse do not occur randomly. However, we aim to control for possible confounding factors such as individual economic context. Moreover, the causal setting for many questions may be difficult or impossible to find, and therefore, a quasi-experimental setting like this brings out valuable information on the issue.

6.3 Use of cash-for-care among immigrants in the 2000s (Substudy III)

This study analyses the length of cash-for-care spells among immigrant and native-born parents in Finland for children born in 1999–2007. The length of the spells reflects the starting age of day care, however being censored to the age of three, which is the upper age limit of cash-for-care, and to the start of new maternity leave if the mother is expecting another child. To deduce the length of home care, the censoring of the spells were accounted for in the survival analysis. Moreover, the censoring due to the start of a new maternity leave was more prevalent among families from refugee origins (38 % of spells) than native-borns (23 % of spells).

The results are mostly in line with international literature: immigrant families tend to look after their children at home for longer periods than native-borns and respectively, be under-represented in day care especially below the age of three. Figure 5 (p. 44) presents the crude take-up rates of cash-for-care by the child's age in months among native-born and immigrant families. We can see that the gaps in the use of cash-for-care are smaller when the child is younger. Families from OECD countries use cash-for-care then even slightly less than native-borns. However, the gaps between native-born and immigrant families widen as the child grows older and are the widest when the child is two years old. Then, approximately 40% of two-year-old children with Finnish-born mothers are looked after at home compared to 60% of immigrant children (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Take-up rate of the cash-for-care subsidy by the origin of the mother, percentage of children^a born in 1999–2007.



^a Children whose mothers start a new maternity leave are excluded from the analysis for the rest of the months.

The variation between immigrant groups reveal a somewhat worrying trend: Cash-for-care spells are the longest in families where the parents are from typical refugee origins, the group that would need the most support with integration. Similarly, the spells are the shortest in families originating from an OECD country who are integrated best to the labour markets.

The lower day care participation of children from ethnic or immigrant backgrounds is typically explained by their distinct economic status and the preferences of parents. In some previous studies the immigrant-native gaps are almost completely explained by the socio-economic context of families (Kahn and Greenberg 2010; Krapf 2014). However, this is not the issue in the study at hand. Immigrant-native gaps diminish only slightly after controlling for socio-economic and demographic factors. For families from OECD countries, including controls even widen the differences. There are a couple of issues that may contribute to the finding.

First, in many previous contexts such as the US, day care fees create barriers for low-income families' participation in day care services (Leseman 2002). However, in the Finnish case the cost-barriers for day care participation are presumably low: day care fees are means-tested, with the lowest income bracket having no fees. Moreover, the right to public day care is guaranteed by law. However, the provision of a cash-for-care subsidy sets contradicting incentives, and therefore may lessen the appeal of low cost day care services.

Second, the effect of controls is always somewhat dependent on the empirical specification, and the comparison to previous studies should be made carefully. Unlike in most previous studies, maternal employment after birth was not controlled for in this study, only parental income before birth. This was done because in Finland, maternal employment and the use of cash-for-care are strong substitutes. The other difference

in empirical specification is that, when controlling for the immigrant status of the spouse, the reference category is set to homogeneous couples, that is, both immigrants or both native-borns. This also contributes to the persisting gaps after controls. Last, the remaining gaps may reflect differences in preferences and norms. For instance, concomitant to the views on the best interest of the child, minority language speakers may want to ensure the acquisition of the first language at home before entering multi-lingual day care services (Liang et al. 2000). In addition, day care services may appear less desirable if the immigrant family feels that their cultural background is not sufficiently acknowledged in the services (Leseman 2002; Lazzari and Vandenbroeck 2012; Lastikka and Lipponen 2016). Lastly, cultural gender norms may contribute to long care spells at home (e.g. Pehkonen 2006).

The analysis provided some additional evidence about the gender division of cash-for-care use in immigrant families. In 19 out of 20 cases only the mother was reported as the caregiver. The division was slightly more skewed among all immigrant families and reached the highest levels among families with refugee origins (94.8% among native-borns, 96.6% among families with refugee origins). The spells used by fathers were shorter than those used by mothers in all groups.

Moreover, immigrant parents did not demonstrate much change in their care choices in accordance to the length of stay in Finland, if the labour market outcomes were controlled for. The effect was statistically significant only for families where the mother originated from the former Soviet Union. The migration cohort had more statistical power, however, with no consistent pattern between immigrant groups.

It should be noted that the cash-for-care spells of all groups shortened and immigrant-native gaps narrowed significantly through the studied birth cohorts of 1999–2009. The trend is not fully explained by observed characteristics or differences between migration cohorts. The exact reason for this finding can only be speculated in this study. It may be partly due to the improved employment situation of mothers during the study period (Statistics Finland 2017). Perhaps also the steering practices and information provision in child health clinics changed during the period. However, this is left for later research to find out.

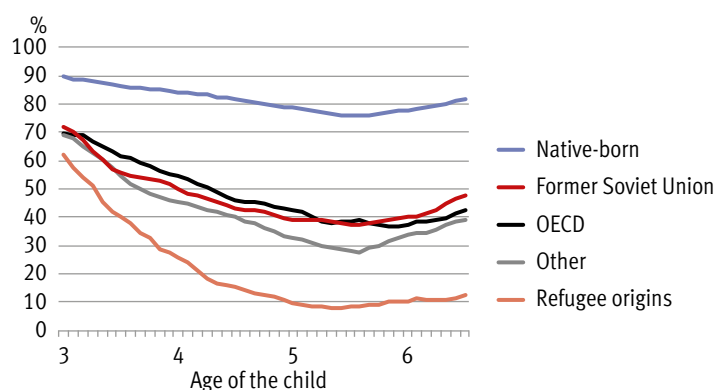
6.4 Parent at home, child in day care? Examining immigrant families' care choices in the Finnish policy context (Substudy IV)

This study examines the use of the cash-for-care sibling supplement paid for the home care of children older than three years of age. The supplement can only be paid to families who also have a younger child under the age of three in home care. Consequently, the analysis concentrates on the care choice of an older sibling between the ages of three and seven.

The context has special implications: because the younger sibling is looked after at home in any case, the decision is not directly affected by the parents' preferences for themselves but rather by other issues, such as the parents' views on the best interest of the child, economic incentives and the availability of services. Consequently, it somewhat resembles a situation in earlier research where maternal employment after birth was controlled for (Krapf 2014). However, because of the specification, most employed mothers are excluded from analysis.

Contrary to Substudy III, in this context immigrant families take their older child to day care more often than the families with a native-born mother. A majority of native-born families use the cash-for-care sibling supplement (80%), but immigrant families less so (36%). Also, the differences between immigrant groups, presented in Figure 6, are contrary to the findings of Substudy III: the families from typical refugee origins take their children to day care most often whereas the other three immigrant groups fall in between the take-up rates of native-borns and families from refugee origins. The native-borns distinguish themselves clearly from all immigrant groups.

Figure 6. Monthly take-up rate of the cash-for-care sibling supplement among eligible^a children by the origin of the mother, percentage of children born in 1999–2006.



^a Children who have a younger sibling on cash-for-care during the particular month are considered eligible. Approximately one fifth of the children in all age groups were eligible for the supplement.

Although earlier results demonstrated that immigrant-native gaps in day care participation are narrower for older children (Fram and Kim 2008; Kahn and Greenberg 2010), no study has observed a higher prevalence of immigrant children in day care. Moreover, one could assume that the differences in the socio-economic background of the families would drive the result because the day care fees are means-tested in the Finnish system. However, including the control variables have only little diminishing effect on the gaps in this study.

Again, the study data cannot provide a thorough explanation for the finding. However, the most probable explanation lies in the immigrants' preferences for the child's development and integration (Uttal 1997; Liang et al. 2000; Obeng 2007). The parents perhaps acknowledge the beneficial effect of day care on the socialization and language acquisition of the child. The hypothesis is further backed by the fact that families that have lived longer in Finland, and are therefore better integrated on average, choose home care more often.

However, the significance of the observed immigrant-native gaps raises some further suspicions about the role of provided information. It may very well be that immigrant families have received recommendations from officials at, for example, municipal child health clinics. Annual visits to these clinics are an important part of the Finnish child welfare system (Aittasalo et al. 2008). However, none of the major municipalities report having official policies or rules in place that would explain the strong pattern. In the end, families are expected to make their own decisions.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Summary of the findings

This study compilation described and analysed the immigrant-native differences in child care choices in Finnish and Swedish policy contexts. Issues examined were the gender division of parental leave use and the use of the cash-for-care subsidy, that is, the choice between home care and day care. The take-up rates of benefits were studied through extensive administrative register data. The heterogeneity of the immigrant population and the role of the labour market and demographic factors were considered through regression analysis.

The first studied question was the role of policy design in the division of care leaves between fathers and mothers among immigrant families. Immigrant fathers in both countries used both paternity and parental leave clearly less often than native-born fathers. However, of the two countries, immigrant fathers demonstrated generally higher take-up rates in Sweden than in Finland. The finding persisted also in a detailed immigrant grouping and after controlling for socio-economic factors. Therefore, the differences are largely traced back to policy differences, such as the extensive earmarking of leave to fathers in Sweden. The analysis of Swedish policy reform backs the explanation.

However, Finnish reforms of introducing “conditional earmarking” and adding flexibility were not successful in increasing immigrant fathers’ use of parental leave. Only immigrants from OECD countries and Finnish-born fathers demonstrated an increase in their take-up. It may be that the lack of an actual fathers’ quota in the Finnish system undermined the effects of the reforms for most immigrants. Alternatively, immigrants in Finland may have been less informed about such leaves than immigrants in Sweden.

Substudy II analysed the determinants of fathers’ parental leave on a cross-country level. By exploiting the vivid migration paths between Finland and Sweden, we found further evidence that Finnish-Swedish differences in fathers’ parental leave use in general are mainly due to differences in policy design rather than social norms. In the new policy context, migrant fathers demonstrated similar take-up behaviour to the native-born population, rather than the fathers in their origin. By looking at fathers who have migrated at different ages and have spouses of different origins, we inferred that socialization and gender norms also seem to play some, yet weak, role in the cross-country differences between Finland and Sweden. However, a more decisive role of norms can be assumed for fathers originating from countries where gender equality is supported less.

Substudies III and IV compared the length of home care spells between immigrant and native-born families in the Finnish context which is characterized by pluralistic

policy support for both home and day care. Substudy III shows that foreign-borns look after their child at home longer than native-borns. However, as is shown in Substudy IV, when it comes to the care choice of a 3–7-year-old sibling, immigrants have a clear preference for day care, even more so as their native-born counterparts. The immigrant-native gaps in both substudies diminish slightly but persist after accounting for differences in confounding factors, such as household income or family type.

The remaining differences are probably a sign of distinct preferences and norms which are not explicitly observed in the data compiled from administrative sources. It may very well be that in the Finnish pluralistic setting, where both home care and day care are heavily subsidized and the financial consequences of both choices do not differ significantly, the preferences of immigrants become more visible. Although the study cannot provide a watertight explanation, the pattern most probably reflects how many immigrant families acknowledge the benefits of day care for their children's language acquisition and socialization after the age of three. However, the officials in Finnish child health clinics may play an important role in steering these choices.

Finally, discussing immigrants as one homogeneous group clearly gives a limited and misleading picture about the issue at hand. The heterogeneity of immigrants was taken into account by forming 4–6 groups according to the parents' origins. The variation between the groups was large in all cases. Immigrants from OECD countries typically demonstrated a pattern closest to the native-borns, whereas immigrants from typical refugee origins presented the most distinct behaviour. Similar differences between groups are found in most immigrant-related studies, and they reflect differences in socio-economic context as well as in the cultural distance to the destination country.

7.2 Discussion

Despite the policy support for gender-equal division, child care and parental leave use still remain clearly gendered in Finland and Sweden, and even more so among immigrant families. It has previously been speculated that the differences of immigrant families may stem from more insecure labour market attachment, cultural gender norms and information deficit. The first issue seems somewhat proven because immigrant-native gaps are substantially diminished, even halved when socio-economic factors such as household income before the birth of the child are controlled for. However, the results also leave room for other explanations, for instance, cultural gender norms and information deficit. Because these factors are unobserved in the register data, they can only be speculated in this study.

Regardless of the ultimate cause, Substudy I shows most importantly that the care choices in immigrant families are not stagnant but responsive to leave policy design and its monetary incentives. The Swedish parental leave system of long gender allocations and flexibilities seems to really provide incentives to divide parental leave more

equally also in immigrant families. In addition to monetary incentives, policy architecture, or what economists call “nudges” (e.g. Thaler and Sunstein 2008), may play a role. For example, in Sweden the shared parental leave is allocated between parents, and leave days may be transferred to the other parent with a separate application. In Finland, parental leave is not reserved for either parent specifically and one parent can apply for it without the other’s consent. This difference in policy architecture may also drive the Finnish-Swedish differences in parental leave division.

Where Substudy I brought forth the role of policies, Substudy II provides some evidence of the role of gendered norms in care choices by examining fathers who have migrated to the host country at different ages. The inference relies on the socialization theory, that is, that cultural gender norms take root, to some extent, during one’s childhood and adolescence. Naturally, plenty individual variation exists and also cultural norms are challenged and negotiated by individuals to varying extents. However, the adoption of the norms, which differ between the countries on average, focuses on the formative years and therefore can be studied with age at migration.

The patterns found are in line with the socialization hypothesis. Even between Finnish-born and Swedish-born fathers, norms seem to play a role in fathers’ parental leave use. For other countries with greater cultural distance, the norms presumably play a more significant role for fathers’ use of parental leave. However, the information deficit may also play a stronger role in that case, not least because many of the migrants between Finland and Sweden are fluent in both native languages (e.g. Hedberg and Kepsu 2003).

The role of information in welfare services for immigrants is a disputed topic. While it is seen that providing information in multiple languages contributes to the realization of immigrants’ social rights, most of the information in Finland and Sweden is provided only in the native language(s) and in English. In addition, social insurance institutions often provide free-of-cost interpreter services for other languages, however, with varying availability and queues. More recently, there has been a possibility for interpreting via video connections in selected times of the week. It has also been maintained that too much provision of services in foreign languages hinders immigrants’ acquisition of the native language and integration, and should therefore be avoided (Ager and Strang 2008).

The second studied outcome was immigrants’ use of cash-for-care, which roughly translates to non-participation in day care. Previous empirical evidence suggests that participation in day care services benefits the integration and school success of children, especially for those with an immigrant background. However, in line with previous literature from other contexts, the results from Substudy III show that immigrants tend to look after their children longer at home. Also in this case, the im-

migrant-native differences in day care participation are to some extent traced back to the disadvantaged economic context of immigrants.

Lazzari and Vandenbroeck (2012) argue that a Nordic kind of universal and affordable access to day care services may contribute to overcoming stratification in day care participation with the most benefits to children with disadvantaged backgrounds. However, as seen from the Finnish case, universal access to day care services may not level out the differences in participation if the opposite care mode is also subsidized. This is backed up by the international comparison in Ghysels and Van Lancker (2011): Finland stands out somewhat as an outlier among Nordic countries, with day care participation being most skewed towards higher-income families.

However, after the age of three, immigrants in Finland show a pattern that is less supported by evidence in previous literature. Despite the financial support for also looking after older siblings at home, most immigrant families choose to place them in day care while looking after the younger children at home. This pattern is clearly distinct from native-born families whose children are usually looked after at same place. The finding that immigrants tend to not use cash-for-care for siblings over the age of three may be a sign of preference to help the child's language acquisition or socialization. The effect is strong, and child welfare officials may contribute to it.

7.3 Critical perceptions of the study

The aim of the study was to scrutinize the child care choices among immigrants in the Nordic policy context. However, it can be disputed how much the take-up of benefits really reflects the occurrence of actual choice. We cannot be sure, for instance, that the parents were really aware of the benefits. Also, the independence of the choice is unsure: how well do officials in child health clinics, for instance, inform parents about the options or even steer their choices. It can be assumed that unawareness plays a marginal role in the use of cash-for-care because ninety percent of families use it and the levels are even higher among immigrant than native-born populations. For fathers' use of parental leave, in turn, unawareness may play a more notable role, especially in Finland where the information deficit has been prevalent also among the general population (Salmi and Lammi-Taskula 2015). Therefore, "choice" in this study should be understood in broad terms, including also unawareness and distortion.

Moreover, the central aspect of the study was to disentangle the determinants of the choices. The role of policies and the immigrants' distinct socio-economic position were examined. The role of socio-economic factors was discussed on the basis of the regression results. The policy effects were scrutinized through the cross-country comparison of immigrant-native gaps in the use of different parental benefits (Substudy I), the analysis of policy reforms (Substudy I) and analysing fathers of same origins in multiple policy contexts (Substudy II). None of the specifications, even the analysis of policy reforms in Substudy I, can be argued to disentangle the pure

causal effect on the care choice. Inferring causality typically requires a specification with exogenous selection to treated and untreated groups. This can be achieved, for example, if policy reforms are implemented only partially with random assignment (e.g. Angrist and Pischke 2008).

In this study, the effect of policy reforms on different subgroups of immigrants were studied but without incorporating a control group untouched by the reform. Similarly, Substudy II exploits the migration experience in deducing the role of norms and policy. This we called a “quasi-experimental” setting, where ‘quasi’ refers to the non-random selection. The decision for migration, the age at migration and also the selection of spouse are not random processes and may be confounded with unobserved factors that affect the use of parental leave. In the substudies, multiple confounding factors were controlled but some may have very well been left uncontrolled. For instance, fathers who have migrated at different ages may have very different characteristics because of different reasons for migration: those who migrated as children may have moved due to their parents’ work while those who migrated as young adults are more likely to be students.

Nordic countries are typically ranked as the most gender-equal countries in the world (World Economic Forum 2015). Discourse of Nordic gender egalitarianism, which often comes with a certain pride, should also be viewed critically. Vuori (2009) has examined gender equality discourse in Finnish guidebooks for immigrants. The premise in guidebooks is that immigrants have equality problems which should be corrected to the presumably flawless level of the Nordic societies. Moreover, in these books, gender inequality among immigrants is often depicted as a women’s issue. However, the discourse on parental leave, to which this study also belongs, has a clearly different connotation where the fathers are the policy targets.

Moreover, children’s participation in early care and education services is increasingly promoted through human capital investment discourse. This is done both on a national and a supranational level by instances such as the OECD and the European Union. This discourse should be viewed critically. It reduces children to to-be-adults and objects of educational investment right from the birth. Consequently, education in early care services has been increasingly emphasized at the expense of care. (Campbell-Barr and Nygård 2014.)

The study was based on a single type of data, administrative registers, which limits its analytic possibilities. In the future, it would be highly valuable to incorporate other approaches into the study. Merging registers and attitude surveys would be highly interesting because it would enable the comparison of self-assessed determinants and the behaviour observed in registers. The quantitative approach should be complemented with qualitative interviews. In the case of care choices in Finland, interviews of officials in child health clinics would help to explain the patterns found in this study.

Lastly, strictly causal specifications would also be highly valuable to confirm the findings of the correlational studies that nevertheless aim for causal inference. This could be done, for example, by implementing random control trials. At the time of writing, the Finnish government made its mark on this by announcing a trial of free-of-cost day care services for 5-year-old children (Finnish government 2017). However, in order to draw conclusions on immigrants, a sufficient number of cases has to be secured.

Despite its limitations, the study has delivered extensive novel knowledge about the interaction between family policies and immigrant background. Similarly to native-borns, immigrant families' care choices are clearly affected by family policies. Therefore policy goals, such as gender equality and more prevalent participation in day care services, can be facilitated through the design of family policies. Relevant policy features in this respect are gendered earmarking of parental leave as well as more consistent policy support for centre-based day care as opposed to home care. However, policy tools have their limits since care choices are affected by non-economic factors, such as cultural norms or information deficit.

On a more general level, the findings underline the fact that access to (or the appeal of) family policies may differ significantly between different population strata. It may very well be that policies that aim to increase equality in one dimension may decrease it in another. For reaching higher equality, reactions to policies should be examined, not only among general populations, but in relevant subgroups such as immigrants. In that way, one can detect possible partial anomalies or dysfunctions regarding the policies.

In this study, immigrants formed a complex and heterogeneous structure, reflecting most of all a distinct position in labour markets (more unemployment, weaker labour market attachment and lower income), immigrant-specific preferences (language acquisition and integration) and cultural norms (gender norms in fathers' parental leave use). Because of this complexity and intersectionality, the concentration on transnational mobility in social sciences is well-founded, and hopefully continues to increase in the future.

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Welfare states play an active role in supporting gender equality and child development. In family policy, these goals are pursued with allocated parental leave for both parents and subsidized high quality day care services. These policy tools are less successful among immigrant families: parents use parental leave less equally than in other families, and children participate less in day care despite the evidence that they would benefit from it the most.

The study shows that policy features such as earmarked days contribute to immigrant fathers' take-up of parental leave. Social norms also seem to play a role in fathers' parental leave use, even between Finnish-born and Swedish-born fathers. As has been found in previous studies in Europe and the US, immigrant families take care of their children at home longer than native-borns in Finland as well. After the child turns three, however, immigrants in Finland demonstrate an exceptionally strong preference for day care, even stronger than native families.



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ISBN 978-952-284-035-6 (print)

ISBN 978-952-284-036-3 (pdf)

ISSN-L 1238-5050

ISSN 1238-5050 (print)

ISSN 2323-7724 (pdf)

